

New Jersey Black Issue Convention (NJBIC)

Black Opinion Leaders Survey 2010

KEY FINDINGS

THE STUDY

In preparation for its annual New Jersey Black Issues Convention, the Board of Trustees of the New Jersey Black Issues Convention commissioned a survey of black opinion leaders in the State of New Jersey. The primary aim of the survey was to identify the most pertinent issues that the Black community faces in New Jersey in socio-economic and political areas and determine priorities. The findings of the survey will be used as a tool in NJ BIC's discussions during the annual New Jersey Black Issues Leadership Convention and to help shape an action agenda moving forward. The survey was sent electronically to members of NJBIC's network whose contact information was available to the organization and a total of 218 survey responses were collected.

ABOUT THE BLACK NJ OPINION LEADERS

- ◆ The Black opinion leaders surveyed by the New Jersey Black Issues Convention were highly-educated individuals, generally over the age of 50, working in government agencies, academia, or the nonprofit sector earning over \$70,000 annually.
- ◆ A significantly larger percentage of females responded to the survey than males (64% female to 36% male) and the ages of respondents ranged from 20 to 83 with 62% age 50 and older.
- ◆ Close to half of the respondents (47%) reside in counties in Central New Jersey and the smallest percentage of respondents (17%) live in Southern New Jersey. 59% of those surveyed have a Master's degree or higher and 85% have at least a Bachelor's degree.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES

- ◆ In New Jersey: Unemployment and poverty, student achievement and student dropout rates, neighborhood crime and violence, school funding, and the economic crisis were identified as the top five issues for the Black community.
- ◆ At the national level: Education, unemployment and poverty, and crime and violence were prioritized as the most pressing national issues for Blacks.

MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

- ◆ The creation of job opportunities, public education reform, and facilitating increased political and community involvement among Blacks were seen as the most effective strategies among most respondents.
- ◆ Younger respondents (ages 20-45), however, generally identified public education reform as the most important strategy while older respondents expressed stronger support for job creation.

POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND ASSESSMENT

- ◆ The leaders surveyed are highly satisfied with President Obama's job performance but the majority rate the New Jersey Governor and legislature poorly. A significant portion of respondents (64%) even feel that Governor Christie's policies are more harmful to Blacks than other population groups.
- ◆ 70% of respondents rated the NJ legislature's performance as 'poor or very poor' and 76% gave the same rating to Governor Chris Christie.

PERSONAL OUTLOOK

- ◆ Nearly half of the respondents (44%) felt that their family's financial situation had remained the same as compared to last year. At the same time, significantly more respondents reported that their family financial situation had gotten worse or slightly worse (34%) than had gotten better or slightly better (21%)
- ◆ 42% of respondents expect that their family's financial situation will remain the same and 46% anticipate that their situation will be at least slightly better off.

STATE OF THE STATE. . . OF NEW JERSEY

- ◆ 52% were 'uncertain' about the future outlook for Blacks in New Jersey and 27% are 'optimistic/hopeful.'
- ◆ 55% of respondents think that New Jersey is heading in a wrong or somewhat wrong direction and 30% think the state is staying in the same place.
- ◆ Nearly 7 out of 10 (67%) rated the living conditions in New Jersey for black families as 'poor or very poor'
- ◆ Residents of Northern NJ were least likely among the other NJ geographic regions to be very satisfied or satisfied with various aspects about where they live.
- ◆ The percentage of respondents from North Jersey who were very satisfied or satisfied with public safety (34%), health care (33%), public education (20%) and municipal services, and local property taxes (6%) was significantly lower than the other regions.



Report sponsored by:

New Jersey Black Issues Convention & the
New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute

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